

Minutes
ODEAB Meeting
May 14, 2012

Present: Susan MiHalo, Randi Light, John Morris, Sharon Guy and Judy Mollway

John Morris made a motion to accept the minutes with no changes that was seconded by Randi Light. The motion carried.

Susan MiHalo welcomed Sharon Guy to the meeting and noted that her appointment needs to be officially approved by the Town Council. Susan reiterated for Sharon's benefit some of the responsibilities and activities of the ODEAB. Judy Mollway continues to monitor the batteries and let's Porter County Waste Reduction and Recycling District know when the box is nearly full. The main function of the ODEAB is to advise the Town Council and residents on environmental issues and what kind of individual or town action is required to respond to issues, i.e., like Combined Sewer Overflows that affect our beach. The group periodically spends time commenting on pollution permits, and sometimes advice is sought by outside organizations on how to respond. The ODEAB also coordinates the grant for the beach testing program, and Susan brings issues and discussions to the group prior to grant submission. For instance, this past year the ODEAB decided to split the beach in ½ to create two separately monitored beaches.

One issue that can arise is noise from trains or from the industry to the east. It was noted that lately the high-pitch humming sound coming from USS Midwest has been bad. They were supposed to put some sort of awning or something to direct the sound down more, but that has never happened. Susan will try to contact Mark Henry at USS Midwest. She may have him get in touch with John Morris as John has had more experiences with the sound at his house.

Sharon asked about getting a "quiet zone" established at the rail crossing. Judy remembered that when the Town Council looked into this previously it was very cost-prohibitive (\$85,000?). Judy will try to talk with Paul Panther about previous work on this issue.

Susan informed the group that Emily Skish will be doing the beach water sampling on weekends instead of John Wilcox, who declined to help this year due to work changes. John Morris agreed to fill in for Karen Berrier for when she is out of town for the first two weeks of the program. Susan and John explained that turbidity is matter suspended in the water and it is used in the Predictive Model for beach water quality because E. coli tends to adhere to suspended particles. The Predictive Model attempts to determine how much E. coli is in the water because E. coli is an indicator of other possible pathogens in the water. 18 hour E. coli tests are also run to make sure the Predictive Model is working within the desired confidence level.

Judy reported on the E-Waste collection and the pick ups for Habitat for Humanity. Twelve households participated in the Habitat for Humanity effort. She noted that apparently someone cut all the cords on the TVs so they could not be rescued if they still worked, and that was problematic. It was suggested that next year two different boxes be used – one for reusable items and working TVs and one for E-waste. Perhaps that items need to be locked up somehow.

The Adopt-a-Beach event will be held on June 2nd. Judy will assist Susan with the front desk and with a poster. Set up is at 8:30 a.m. Susan will reach out to the McCasland family to assure them their parking won't be impacted that morning. John will loan a table to Susan.

Susan also reported on her experience with cleaning the Portage Lakefront Site beach with a group at the end of April and suggested that if any area groups, i.e., Youth Group, Boy Scouts, etc., are looking to clean

a beach, that one needs a lot of help. ROTC and others who need service points would be good too. Jenny Orsburn is the Superintendent of the Portage Parks and certainly would appreciate any help she can get.

The wildflowers are beginning to appear around Long Lake Marsh. Susan reminded that group that the project needs to be maintained until 2025. A suggestion was made to host an outreach at the end of June with the new Town Council so that they can more fully understand the work completed and the meaning of the work completed, and how valuable the ecosystem is when the invasives are controlled. If we dig it out or kill the plants, we might have to return monies to the Lake Michigan Coastal Program. Maintenance includes control of some of the weedy species, like Horsetweed; as well as control of invasives like Purple Loosestrife, Phragmites and the cattails. There also needs to be prescribed burns periodically. Susan will begin working with the ODVFD to see if they could burn in and around the area in November, and to also potentially burn the erosion sock now that it has served its purpose. Susan offered to show ODEAB members around the project after the meeting.

Next year the ODEAB would like to focus on septic education and may apply for an ODCF grant to assist with that effort. Susan told people at the April Town Council meeting that septic systems should be cleaned out about every three years to function optimally and to extend the life of the septic system.

Susan reported that she sent a recommendation to the Plan Commission regarding using native green infrastructure for erosion control as opposed to traditional turf grass and non-native plants. A chart she provided shows how native plant systems have deeper root structures than turf grass and non-native plant species. Susan is not asking that native plants be required but that suggestions and resources can be provided by the ODEAB when plans that require planting or replanting an area comes before the Plan Commission.

John made a motion, and Judy seconded, to have the 2013 budget again be \$250. The motion carried. Some of the monies are annually allocated to pay John Olsen to spray the cattails in Long Lake Marsh, which needs to be done to keep the cattails and Phragmites at bay.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.